

For Immediate Release

October 7, 2009

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**VALLEY FORWARD TO HOST CHILDREN AND NATURE ADVOCATE
AT 40th ANNUAL LUNCHEON PROGRAM**

PHOENIX (October 7, 2009) – Richard Louv, author of the bestselling book *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder* will deliver the keynote address at Valley Forward’s 40th Annual Luncheon from 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m., Friday, December 11 at The Phoenix Convention Center.

Chairman of the Children & Nature Network, Louv identifies a clear link between the lack of nature in children’s lives to some of the most disturbing childhood trends, such as rises in obesity, attention disorders and depression. His book has created a national conversation and galvanized an international movement – No Child Left Inside – to reconnect children with the outdoors.

The event commemorates a milestone anniversary for Valley Forward, a business-based environmental public interest organization. It is open to the public at \$75 per person; reservations can be made by calling (602) 240- 2408 or registering online at www.valleyforward.org.

“Louv identifies the child in nature is as an endangered species, which is disconcerting but an unfortunate reality,” notes Diane Brossart, president of Valley Forward. “Parks and open space planning have been at the heart of our organization since its founding in 1969. We have historically focused on the delicate balance between the natural and manmade environment and are excited to be part of this important dialogue.”

The recipient of the 2008 Audubon Medal, Louv will offer simple ways to heal the broken bond between children and nature. He emphasizes the positive impact unstructured play outdoors has on healthy child development, and his body of scientific evidence offers practical suggestions for parents, teachers, urban planners, and the kids at heart.

Valley Forward is a 40-year-old, non-profit public interest organization that brings business and civic leaders together to convene thoughtful public dialogue on regional issues and to promote cooperative efforts to improve the environment and livability of Valley.